DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 206 893 CE 030 025

TITLE Final Project Report of Optimizing Vocational Development in the Handicapped, September 1980-June 1981.
INSTITUTION Middlesex County Vocational and Technical High Schools, New Brunswick, N.J.
SPONS AGENCY New Jersey State Dept. of Education, Trenton. Div. of Vocational Education.
PUB DATE Jun 81
NOTE 19p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS After School Programs; Communication Skills; Community Involvement; Community Services; *Daily Living Skills; *Disabilities; Educational Environment; Employment Potential; Family Environment; Home Economics Skills; Home Management; Interpersonal Competence; Leisure Time; Mainstreaming; Money Management; *Normalization (Handicapped); Parent Counseling; Parent Participation; Program Development; *Program Effectiveness; Program Improvement; Secondary Education; Self Care Skills; Special Education; Systems Approach; *Vocational Education; *Vocational Rehabilitation; Work Environment
IDENTIFIERS Consumer Skills

ABSTRACT

A project helped handicapped high school students to develop and implement realistic vocational plans and to develop functional skills in various areas associated with independent living. Designed as an evening course open to full time special needs vocational high school students, the program consisted of the following two components: (1) a social interaction group that addressed the problems and conflicts facing handicapped students in their community, school, and home; and (2) an independent living skills program that included individual instruction and practical application of skills in such general areas as travel, grooming, consumer, home living, and leisure time activities. Group leaders, students, and parents all reported significant changes in the attitudes and behavior of participants in the social interaction group. In addition, more than 85 percent of the students involved in the independent living skills program successfully completed the program objectives and demonstrated their ability to function independently in various areas of everyday living. Because of the project's success, curricular changes were recommended to incorporate numerous aspects of this after-school program into in-school special needs programs. (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED206893

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

OF

OPTIMIZING VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

IN THE HANDICAPPED

1980-1981

MIDDLESEX COUNTY VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

112 RUES LANE
EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ 08816
(201) 257-3300

PROJECT DIRECTOR
BRIAN J. LOUGHLIN
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

(201) 257-7715

CE030025

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L.F. Price

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

THIS PROJECT REPORTED HEREIN WAS CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO A CONTRACT FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND CAREER PREPARATION. IT WAS FUNDED UNDER SECTION 132 OF PUBLIC LAW 94-482.

PROJECT DURATION:

SEPTEMBER, 1980
Beginning Date

JUNE, 1981
Ending Date

THE CONTRACTORS UNDERTAKING THIS PROJECT WERE ENCOURAGED TO EXPRESS FULLY THEIR JUDGMENTS IN PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL MATTERS. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS DO NOT, THEREFORE, NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL FUNDING AGENCY POSITIONS OR POLICIES.

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

IDENTIFICATION NO._____ AMOUNT FUNDED_____

FUNDED UNDER SECTION_____ OF P. L. 94-482

PROJECT TITLE: OPTIMIZING VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE HANDICAPPED (A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INTERVENTION)

LEGAL NAME OF APPLICANT DISTRICT, INSTITUTION OR AGENCY: Middlesex County Vocational & Technical High School
P.O. Box 220
112 Rues Lane
East Brunswick, NJ 08816

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Brian J. Loughlin

TELEPHONE NUMBER: (201) 257-7715

ABSTRACT
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

A systems approach to intervention is utilized in an effort to increase the handicapped students' ability to function in four major social systems (School, Community, Family and Employment). The program is multifaceted and provides intervention on several levels. A parent program and a student program were utilized as components of the intervention plan. Upon completion of the program, it was found that:

1. Students were reported to be more productive in the School, the Community, and the Family.
2. Students were better prepared for employment in the competitive labor market.
3. Students developed numerous skills required for independent living.
4. Parents gained a greater understanding of their children amd the community services that are available to them.
5. Students increased their inter-personal communication skills.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
1.	NEED AND PROBLEM	1 and 2
2.	OBJECTIVES	3, 4, 5
3.	RELATED RESEARCH	6, 7
4.	GENERAL DESIGN	8
5.	FINDINGS	9
6.	DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES	10
7.	SEX BIAS AND SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING	11
8.	CONCLUSIONS	12
9.	RECOMMENDATIONS	13
10.	REFERENCES	14

NEED AND PROBLEM

The world of an adolescent can be viewed in terms of his involvement in three inter-related social systems. These basic social systems are the School, the Community and the Home. The adolescent is a product of his relationships with the "significant others" within these systems. The "significant others" usually are members of his family, his classroom peers, his extra school organizations (clubs, church, part-time job, neighborhood associations, etc.) plus individual change agents such as teacher, psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor, minister, friend or other helping person.

Any intervention plan involves changes in the individual's relationships with these "significant others". Since intervention involves others who make changes and are affected by changes, these others (especially parents) should be involved in the planning. Any change in this network within which the adolescent is inter-dependent, whether the change be central or peripheral, will more or less affect the entire network. Thus, changes in the adolescent, his family, his vocational training, peer group, etc. constitutes intervention.

The role of the educators as helping persons within the social system of the school, is to address the problems and conflicts that face the handicapped student in his school and the world of work.

Traditionally, education has remained within the basic system of the School, yet the results of education are felt in the two remaining basic systems (Community and Home). The School can be viewed as a temporary system, later to be replaced by another more permanent system, namely Employment.

The most significant social system for the adolescent is most likely the Community. It is within the Community that the adolescent is involved with friends and peers. Social involvement at this age of development seems to predominate all other social systems. In viewing the handicapped students, the social system of the Community is almost non-existent. In general, the handicapped student has very little involvement in his Community. For many handicapped students, friends consist only of siblings and schoolmates. The Community is a very important system in which students must learn to function. Adaptive and productive functioning in the Community is a necessity for successful functioning in the later developing system of Employment. Education cannot teach a student to function effectively in the Community or Employment. Effective functioning must be learned and experienced within these given systems.

The need is to intervene in the social systems already described as the Community and the Family. It must be remembered that vocational education for the handicapped should recognize and incorporate the Community and the Family in their educational program.

Any vocational education program for the handicapped, to be successful, must be viewed as a cooperative effort between numerous parties---the Student, the School, the Family, the Community and the Employer. It is only when all of these forces are brought together and are allowed to interact with one another that viable and successful programs are brought to fruition.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The broad-based objective of this project is to develop and implement realistic vocational plans for those handicapped students and families that are participating in this program. Students will also develop functional skills in various areas associated with independent living. Included under this broad-based objective is the active involvement and utilization of resources that are available in the Family and the Community, in conjunction with the resources of the Vocational School.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

A. Social interaction groups will focus on the attainment of the following objectives:

1. Students will increase their understanding of the word handicap as it pertains to them.
2. Students will assess their strengths and weaknesses with regards to overall functioning.
3. Students will explore the concept of employability as it pertains to them.
4. Students will attempt to develop work habits and attitudes necessary for competitive employment.
5. Students will identify more appropriate social behaviors.
6. Students will attempt to develop more productive interpersonal relationships.
7. Students will increase their awareness of values and attitudes that affect their functioning in School, the Home, and the Community.
8. Students will develop realistic expectations for themselves.
9. Students will pinpoint areas of concern and areas of conflict for themselves.
10. Students will develop coping mechanisms that can be utilized in the School, the Home, and the Community.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS cont'd

11. Students will increase their understanding of problems and conflicts that are common to each other.

12. Students will become more active in the social system identified as the Community.

13. Students will become aware of the various social agencies and community resources that are available.

14. Students will utilize appropriate agencies and community resources.

15. Students will increase productivity in School, the Family and the Community.

B. The independent living skills component will concentrate on the following objectives:

1. The student will understand the need for good grooming skills.

2. The student will demonstrate the ability to maintain good personal hygiene, i.e. bathing, grooming, shaving.

3. The student will recognize the value of coins.

4. The student will purchase an item and receive correct change.

5. The student will comparison shop for an article of clothing.

6. The student will open and maintain a savings account.

7. The student will be able to read maps, bus schedules, and train schedules.

8. The student will develop the ability to ask for and follow directions.

9. The student will be able to reach a destination alone.

10. The student will demonstrate the ability to buy food and prepare basic meals.

11. The student will demonstrate the ability to keep living quarters clean, i.e. dusting, washing dishes, washing floors, vacuuming and making beds.

12. The student will be exposed to various community programs and supportive agencies.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS cont'd

13. The student will demonstrate appropriate behaviors in a restaurant and other social situations.

14. The student will be exposed to various crafts, hobbies, and leisure activities.

The operational plan consists of two major components; a social interaction group and an independent living component. Both proposed programs will be provided in the evening.

RELATED RESEARCH

Current literature in the fields of community psychology and social systems give support to the theory upon which this proposal is based. Stanley A. Murrell (1973) agrees that social system factors play a crucial part in determining the behaviors of individuals who participate in these systems. This same assumption has been suggested as the basic postulate of community psychology by Robert Reiff (1968). From Reiff's view, all behavior is a function of the social system in which it occurs. He feels that an individual's behavior cannot be studied separately from the social context in which it occurs. The individual does not behave in isolation from his social environment.

This project is an attempt at developing "a growth model" that can be effectively utilized in a public school setting. Adelson (1972) discusses this concept of a "growth model" in his conception of community psychology. "With a growth model, we move to concern with individuals who through group and community processes join together in achieving their own objectives as they help themselves and are not the objects of help from professionals, and as they are concerned with the reconstructing social systems to provide conditions more congenial for their own growth".

Seymour Sarason (1967) believes...."that any theory which purpourts to explain behavior and which does not come to grips with man-system relationships is a naive, incomplete and mischief producing theory".

A systems approach to Community and Family involvement attempts to increase our understanding of this "man-system relationship" and to maximize its effectiveness.

A successful project based on this theoretical orientation was funded under PL 94-482 during the 1978-1979 school year. The results of that project reaffirms the efficacy of a systems approach to optimizing VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE HANDICAPPED.

The findings of our initial project revealed areas of additional concern that are now being addressed in our present project proposal. More specifically, it was found that many of the parents who participated in the project were concerned with issues and conflicts related to their sons/daughters ultimate ability to function independently.

The issues involving independence focused on numerous areas of functioning, i.e. vocational independence, financial independence, social independence, emotional independence and independent living.

GENERAL DESIGN

Student Program (Social Interation Group)

Any student enrolled in our full-time Special Needs program was eligible to participate in one of several student groups. These small groups were held on a weekly basis with the objective of developing social skills and enhancing interpersonal relationships among group members. Group involvement and participation was a priority. These groups addressed the problems and conflicts that face the handicapped student in his/her School, Community and Home. These procedures were found to be effective in achieving the stated objectives.

Student Program (Independent Living Component)

The independent living skills program was conducted once a week for 2-1/2 hours. The general areas of instruction included travel skills, grooming skills, consumer skills, home living skills and leisure time activities. Each area of instruction was accompanied by an opportunity to apply the skills taught in a real life situation, i.e. planning and cooking meals, dining in a restaurant, developing budgets, purchasing merchandise, writing letters.

The students were divided into three groups. For every session, each of three teachers taught and reinforced a different objective for the same general skill area. Students rotated as a group to another teacher for instruction of a different objective. After the students exhibited mastery of a specific objective in one skill area, they were required to apply their newly attained skill. This application served as an evaluative measure of that same skill. For example, the students were instructed on comparative shopping through use of catalogs and newspaper ads. Practical application of this objective was to actually go to two stores and compare the quality and price of a certain item.

FINDINGS

The students involved in the social interaction were reported by the group leader to have made significant progress in the areas of self concept, social interaction, and interpersonal communications. Students and parents reported changes in attitude, and behavior of the participants, the attainment of the stated objectives varied from student to student.

Those students involved in the independent living skills program demonstrated their ability to function independently in various areas of everyday living as a result of intensive instruction and practice.

More than 85% of the students involved in the project successfully completed the stated objectives.

Those students who were unsuccessful in completing the stated objectives require additional instruction and in some cases individual assistance in the areas of independent living.

Many parents of the students involved in the independent living program reported significant changes in their sons/daughters behavior at home. Among those changes reported were the following: greater willingness to accept responsibility, greater interest in personal appearance, increased social involvement, and increased participation in completing household responsibilities.

These findings demonstrate quite clearly the efficacy of School based intervention programs for the handicapped adolescent.

Social, vocational and community independence is an attainable goal for the majority of handicapped individuals. The key to the attainment of the above goal is the development of effective and meaningful intervention programs.

DISSEMINATION

The students, their parents, faculty and any other interested party are offered the opportunity of viewing the final project report. Copies of this information will be maintained and made available to the State Department of Education upon request.

SEX BIAS AND SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING

Every effort was made to include both male and female students in this project. Areas of vocational training were viewed strictly in terms of the skills required to be successful in a given trade area.

CONCLUSIONS

Optimizing Vocational Development in the Handicapped proved itself to be a very valuable program. The need for instruction in non-traditional areas is quite evident. Social development and independent living of the handicapped are two areas of functioning that have not been adequately addressed by educators. Success in these areas cannot be inferred. Specific programs of instruction are needed in order to maximize the handicapped adolescents integration into the systems of Employment and the Community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been recommended and an attempt is currently being made to incorporate numerous aspects of this after school project into our Special Needs program. Independent living skills and social skill development are two areas that are being given greater emphasis in the Individualized Educational Programs (IEP'S) of all our Special Needs students. Curricular changes have also been recommended in order to address these areas more effectively.

REFERENCES

1. Adelson, D., Toward a Conception of Community Psychology. In D. Adelson, MAN AS THE MEASURE: THE CROSSROADS, (New York: Behavorial Publications, 1972) pp. 1-16.

2. Loughlin, B., Conneran, M., Optimizing Vocational Development in the Handicapped: A Systems Approach to Community and Family Involvement. A proposal funded by the N.J. Dept. of Education, Division of Vocational Education under P.L. 94-482, September, 1978.

3. Murrell, S., COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS, (New York: Behavioral Publications, 1973)

4. Reiff, R., Social Intervention and the Problem of Psychological Analysis, AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST, (1968), 23, 524-531.

5. Murrell, S., COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH JOURNAL, (1971, 7, 209-217)

6. Sarason, S.B., Towards a Psychology of Change and Innovation, AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST, 1979, 227-233.

7. Sarason, S.B., THE CULTURE OF THE SCHOOL AND THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971).